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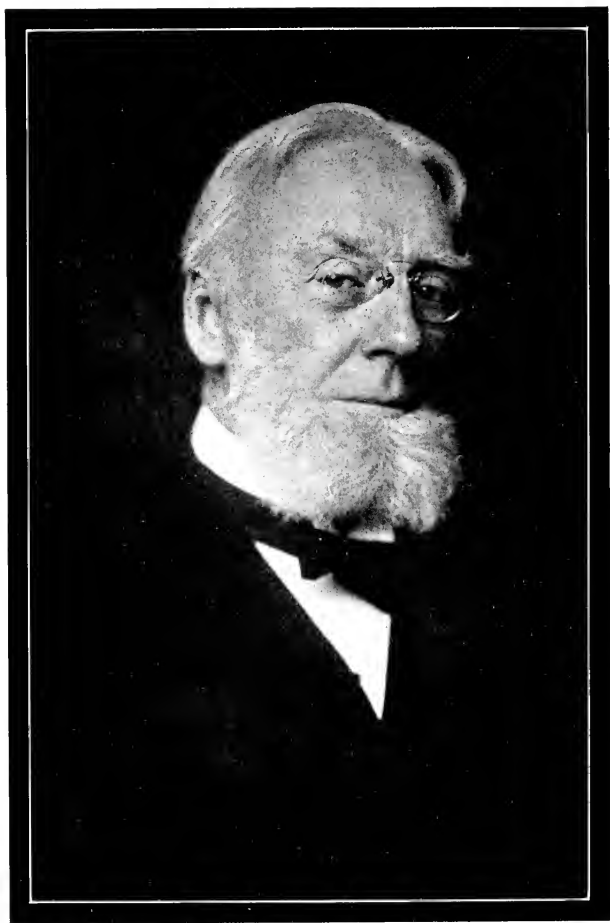


A LIFE WELL LIVED

**IN MEMORY OF
ROBERT CURTIS OGDEN**







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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

ON August 6, 1913, after a long illness, Robert C. Ogden died at his summer home in Kennebunkport, Maine. Mr. Ogden was born in Philadelphia in 1836; in 1858 he moved to New York and all his business life was spent in these two cities. Memorial services were held in New York October 26 and in Brooklyn, November 9, 1913. On these occasions addresses were delivered by Dr. Francis Brown, president of Union Theological Seminary; Dr. Francis G. Peabody, vice president of the board of trustees of Hampton Institute; Dr. S. C. Mitchell, president of the Virginia Medical College; Dr. L. Mason Clarke, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn; ex-President William H. Taft, of Yale University; and Honorable Job E. Hedges, of New York. Three of these addresses, representing different parts of the country, are presented in this pamphlet.

In the death of Robert C. Ogden, Hampton Institute has experienced one of the greatest losses in its history. A member of its board of trustees since 1874 and president of that body since 1894, he has had much to do with the wonderful growth of this school, founded in 1868 by his friend, General Samuel Chapman Armstrong.

Their friendship, begun on that day more than forty-five years ago, when young Armstrong, after a long journey from his Hawaiian home, carried to Mr. Ogden in New York a letter of introduction, continued steadfast and unbroken until General Armstrong's death in 1893. And the result of that friendship—a lifelong devotion on Mr. Ogden's part, of his time, thought, money, and influence to the type of education which his friend had given his life—is today shown in the success of Hampton and

Tuskegee Institutes as exponents of that type of education—learning by doing and the development of character through self-help.

No details of a large and absorbing business ever interfered with Mr. Ogden's annual trip to Hampton with a party of friends as his guests, who were asked to take part in the ceremony of laying the corner stone of some new building or invited to note the mute appeal of a foundation dug by willing hands but waiting for the wherewithal to erect the much-needed superstructure. These friends never failed to gain new inspiration and greater incentive to work for others, or to carry away in their hearts stronger faith in the work for downtrodden races, which in those days was to Hampton's founder a tremendous struggle against great odds. Never did Mr. Ogden fail him or his successor, and present-day Hampton can never appreciate too highly the devotion of the courteous, kindly, generous-hearted man it has been accustomed to see moving about its campus year after year.

In the fall of 1896, Mr. Ogden delivered an address at the opening of the Hampton Trade School in which he spoke of the new opportunity it afforded the Negro to hold his own, industrially, in the South. He always welcomed every such opportunity, not only at Hampton but in the world outside. He was a true friend to the Negro and Indian races and to all other backward peoples. The graduates of Hampton count among their dearest memories the words of fatherly advice they heard on Anniversary Day from the president of the board of trustees, as he sent them out to their life work.

It is eminently fitting that, on account of Mr. Ogden's long devotion to the work of the Hampton School, some permanent memorial be erected to him there which will always associate his name with the institution. What form such a memorial will take will be determined later.

ROBERT CURTIS OGDEN *

BY FRANCIS GREENWOOD PEABODY

Formerly Plummer Professor of Christian Morals at Harvard University

I WISH I might express in behalf of Hampton Institute—its trustees, its teachers, and its pupils—something of the love and gratitude there so deeply felt for Robert Ogden. Among the many public interests of his varied life none was nearer to his heart than the service of Hampton, and nowhere was he more completely appreciated and revered. He was drawn to this care of the colored race by the irresistible magnetism of Samuel Armstrong, whom he had known and loved since Armstrong first reached this country from Hawaii, and many of the qualities of that chivalric leader of men—single-mindedness, courage, self-forgetfulness, the complete and happy devotion to a great cause—were transmitted by the subtle processes of spiritual heredity to this loyal friend. “I never gave up or sacrificed anything in my life,” wrote Armstrong in the touching memoranda found after his death, and after having apparently sacrificed everything to serve a few colored boys and girls. The same unconsciousness of sacrifice, the same gaiety of demeanor amid difficult duties, marked each step in Mr. Ogden’s self-sacrificing love of Hampton. The most self-distrustful or disheartened teacher found herself sustained by his beneficent smile; the most blundering or timid pupil stood more erect in soul as in body as his erect and gracious friend returned salute. The chill of January softened as by the sudden

* Address at the Ogden Memorial Service at the Central Presbyterian Church, New York, October 26, 1913

coming of spring in Virginia when on some winter morning Mr. Ogden unexpectedly appeared at the school. General Armstrong died in 1893, and in 1894 Mr. Ogden became President of the Board of Trustees of Hampton, of which he had already been a member for nineteen years. During these last twenty years the administration of Hampton has steadily leaned on his discretion, foresight, and devotion. Many consecrated lives and many generous benefactions have been wrought into the work, and Mr. Ogden would be the last to claim as his achievement the expansion of Hampton's opportunity. With the most modest estimate of his own part in its service, he had the happiness to see, under his administration, its buildings multiplied, its standards advanced, its staff of teachers strengthened, and in the twenty years of his presidency its invested property increased eightfold, from \$379,000 to \$2,642,000.

In 1899 a larger area of service opened before him. A few Northern and Southern men had met in 1898 at Capon Springs for a conference on education in the South, and the Principal of Hampton discerned in this gathering a new opportunity for co-operative deliberation. Mr. Ogden responded with enthusiasm to this new call and invited a considerable company of friends to attend the second session of the conference, to procure a frank and fraternal interchange of views between the two sections of our common land. It was the first of a series of such journeys, which proved to be missionary enterprises for the instruction of the North as well as sources of new confidence and inspiration for the disheartened but indomitable South. Many a guest recalls with permanent gratitude the happy intimacies and high discourse of that memorable companionship, and dates from it a new faith in national unity, based on national idealism. To all who shared that happy fellowship there comes today the gentle memory of their genial host, tireless in courtesy, sleepless

till all others slept, yet ever aware of the larger mission involved, and looking past the recreation of the hour to the grave problems of reconciliation and education which lay beyond.

Consequences even more conspicuous and far-reaching have followed from these surveys of the South. At the Conference this year in Richmond, the United States Commissioner of Education did not hesitate to affirm that both of the organizations which have done such unparalleled service for American education—the Southern Education Board with its program of encouragement for the South, and the General Education Board with its vast operations in all parts of the country, for education in the universities, the secondary and rural schools, and for national sanitation—may be traced in their origins to these meetings over which Mr. Ogden presided, and in whose development he had so dominant a share. Many influences have conspired to accomplish these great ends, and many minds have been stirred by this national opportunity, but it is most touching and impressive to remember today that the new call came to at least one leader because he had already committed himself to the care of Hampton, and had been touched by its spirit—the spirit not of sacrifice, but of privilege and love—so that among the causes of a better educated and more healthful America there may be named, in its own modest, yet verifiable, place, the loving service of the least fortunate and least honored of our population.

We turn back then today with affection and honor to this life and ask it to teach us how to live and how to die. We hear in these days much of the spirit of commercialism and materialism in our modern world, as though business life were a form of warfare and piracy, where the unscrup-

ulous win and the honorable lose. But here was a man of large and exacting cares, buying and selling, organizing and building, with energy and foresight, yet maintaining among these tumultuous obligations an interior quietude of spirit which illuminated his very countenance, so that—as was said of Moses—"he wist not that his face shone." Laurence Oliphant once said that the greatest need of England was the need of a spiritually minded man of the world—a man who could live in the world, sharing its responsibilities, accepting its methods, yet detached from it and superior to it, as one who makes it an instrument of spiritual ends. Well, here was just such a man, needed in America as much as in England—a spiritually minded man of the world, knowing his world and mastering it, yet more intimately knowing himself and mastering himself, with the power of a spiritual mind; gaining the world without losing his own soul. What is the secret of this habit of mind? On what terms may a man of affairs apply himself to them without loss of his own soul? It is written, "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon," but it is also written, "Make friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness." Is it possible to be a friend of Mammon without being a servant of Mammon? May one serve God through the Mammon of unrighteousness?

No clearer answer could be given to these searching questions than is given by this life which we affectionately remember today. Its first admonition is this: Keep business itself clean. Purify the sources. Prepare to meet thy God, not on some distant Judgment Day, but each week, downtown. No prodigality in the giving of money can atone for criminality in the making of money. The elementary test of the Christian character under the conditions of the modern world is not in one's giving but in

one's getting, not in one's church but in one's office.

The second teaching is this: Attach yourself to a great cause, lift your eyes from your desk, enlarge your horizon, live in a large world, know how the other half lives. This is not only the way of philanthropy, it is the way of self-discovery. It is not only the helping of others, but the saving of one's own soul. The self-centered life inevitably shrivels; the self-forgetting life naturally expands, until modest capacities and limited gifts may bloom into leadership, power, and even genius, under the sunshine of a compelling and expanding cause. That was what happened to this man. The consecration of his powers enriched and enlarged them. The great cause created in him wisdom and statesmanship, and even touched his lips with eloquence. He was among us as one that served, and that proved his right to lead us all.

There remains, finally, the condition of efficiency which was most marked in our friend. It was the power of a simple, uncomplicated, and consistent religious faith. Speaking of Armstrong in the first Founder's Day address at Hampton, Mr. Ogden said, "Only upon the high spiritual theory can we explain the power of the life which we are now considering." The same high spiritual theory is the key which unlocks his own character. It was said of Count Zinzendorf, the protector of the Moravians, that he could ride the wildest horse in his father's stable, and when asked how he could be at once a Pietist and an athlete, answered, "Only he to whom earthly things are indifferent can be their master." The control of the physical was a witness to the spiritual. Courage came from above. The spiritual mind dominated the animal world. There was the same source of tranquillity, assurance, and patience, in the life of our friend. He had surrendered

himself, and so he had found himself. He came not to do his own will, but the will of Him who sent him, and so his own will grew firm and sure. He was indifferent to power and fame, and so he won the greater distinction of being loved and mourned. Crushing sorrows met him, but his own burden grew lighter because he took on himself the burdens of other lives. It was written of old, "He hath made all things beautiful in their time; also he has set Eternity in their hearts." That is the story of this modern life. Each event was beautiful to him in its time because he had set Eternity in his heart. He had heard the great word, "I am come not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give my life a ransom for many;" but it was, to him, not a summons to sacrifice and resignation so much as a call to privilege and joy.

I shall never forget going one day into the great business establishment which he had created, and mounting from floor to floor through the busy crowds until I came at last to a little upper room. There, above the noises of trade, a dozen of the busiest of business men sat in quiet deliberation concerning great projects of national welfare, and interchanged their dreams of the better America which they saw, not by sight, but by faith. It was a symbol of religion in the twentieth century, of a faith known by its works, of a service which was perfect freedom, of the spiritualization which is still possible for men of the world. One thought of an upper room above the bustle of Jerusalem, where the Master said, "I have given you an example that ye should do even as I have done to you." Nor was the Master himself absent; for it was in His name that these men met, and it was to them also that He said, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them."

ROBERT C. OGDEN'S LABORS IN THE SOUTH *

BY SAMUEL CHILES MITCHELL, Ph.D.

President of the Medical College of Virginia

THE projectile power of personality was happily set forth in the results of the labors for the South of Robert C. Ogden. It is instructive to study his plans for the improvement of public schools, for the betterment of farming, for the enrichment of rural life, for racial adjustment and social progress. It is pleasing to tabulate the statistics that show the increase in school revenues, in the attendance of children, in the efficiency of teaching, and in the moral support given to public education during the past decade in the South. But unless we regard all of these achievements as simply bodying forth the dynamic force of personality, we shall not interpret aright this educational renaissance, so far as our leader affected the results.

Mr. Ogden's personality was contagious. He became a center in organizing constructive friendships. When he began his labors in the South for universal education, there were isolated workers in the several states unacquainted with one another, without any large view of the general task, and without an interchange of common experience. His presence instantly caused all of these workers to leap together, just as atoms form a new combination in the laboratory induced by the presence of a single new element. He had a rare faculty for the discovery of men and of their aptitude for social leadership.

* An address at the Ogden Memorial Service at the Central Presbyterian Church, New York, October 26, 1913

Surpassing even his joy in the discovery of talent was his delight in opening up a career for a man of this sort to deploy his power. His eye seemed to rest upon every worker, and all of us shared in the inspiration and strength that his sympathetic interest daily imparted.

The great thing, however, about Mr. Ogden was not merely his sagacity as to the way in which to do the things that were really worth while in the national life, unerring as his sagacity was in the choice of men and measures. It was not even his passionate love for people, and especially people disadvantaged and in need. But the great thing in him was his faith in the capacity of men to grow, his faith in the essential goodness of the human heart, his faith in the subtle potency of reason, when trained and rightly directed—in a word, his faith in man under the influence of truth and love. It was this structural faith that sustained him in his great labors, that enabled him to overcome all barriers, and that swept him forward with a purpose that moved majestically, like a force in nature.

I can never forget the first time that I saw him, when he stood upon the platform at Hampton Institute, giving a fatherly message to the graduating class of Indian and colored youth that stood before him. He seemed to breathe into the characters of those people his own large spirit of faith, encouragement, aspiration, and spirit of social service. My thought of Divinity became clearer and more concrete as I listened to his words of wisdom and of love.

His philanthropy took naturally the form of a structural purpose; namely, to achieve for the South through the training of children and through the process of social growth, results which all other means, including war and politics,

had been unable to produce. The chief evil of slavery was not economic nor political, but mental and moral. Slavery tended to gag the South. Its sole imperative was: Thou shalt not think. Hence this movement sought to revive discussion, to interpret in terms of education all the factors in the life of the South. "Democracy is government by discussion," says Woodrow Wilson, and the principle implied in this remark was invoked in the South. Future-heartedness marked the movement from the beginning. It was forward-looking. It cherished the past, to be sure, in order to draw thence strength for the tasks of today. The word *education* does not begin to cover the complex bundle of activities surging in this movement. It developed in the South a party of progress, a platform for frank discussion of present-day facts. It called forth a body of literature surcharged with social and moral energies of transforming power. These structural purposes bespeak the statesman rather than the schoolman. Mr. Ogden was a statesman, a state-builder after the order of Horace Mann, Cavour, and Gladstone, all of whom put their trust in truth and relied upon the subtle force of growth to achieve great national ends. They knew full well that "in the long run the forces go with the virtues." Mr. Ogden was the greatest benefactor that the South has known since Appomattox.

Sir Horace Plunkett, while sitting in the British Parliament for eight years, discerned that England in applying for centuries political remedies to Ireland's economic wrongs had failed. It occurred to him one day that it might be well to apply economic remedies to Ireland's economic wrongs. He left his seat in Parliament, went to Ireland and began to improve the farms, to sweeten the homes, to establish co-operative dairies, and to enrich

the life of the people through efficient schools, libraries, and social gatherings. A humble program, to be sure, but it is remaking Ireland—something that eight centuries of “blood and iron” had been unable to do.

So in the South the strong wind, the earthquake, and the devastating fire swept by. God was in none of these, but in the still small voice that whispered an electric message to the heart of the child and strung with energy his arm for the achievement of great social and national ends. I believe that it was given to a business man to hit upon a sounder principle for economic progress, racial adjustment, and national integration than was vouchsafed to any politician or general in the annals of America. The conquests of education alone are enduring. “One former is worth a dozen reformers.” What a lurid glare is shed upon the follies and wastes of War and Reconstruction in view of the beneficent changes wrought by these silent forces of light and love. Never was more finely revealed the regenerative impulse in the heart of man than the signal results of this educational movement through the power of public opinion. In the case of millions of children, Mr. Ogden “thinks in their brain, throbs in their heart, speaks in their conscience, and makes their will leap like a resolute muscle to its task in fulfilling the will of God.”

While Mr. Ogden was a statesman in his grasp of the complex situation in the South, he was also a teacher, but a teacher through inspiring companionships after the order of Socrates and Jesus. He trained a group of social workers who even at this early time are displaying power in foreign embassies, in the Cabinet at Washington, in the Federal Bureau of Education, and in the international task of public health and sanitation. These men all account it

among the highest privileges in their life to have felt the throb of his loving heart.

He was by instinct a leader, a big brother of mankind, yet he delighted to follow. In many instances he took up other men's tasks and pushed them to a completion hardly dreamed of by the men who first conceived the enterprises. At Hampton he took up the task of Armstrong. In 1900 he took up the task of public education in the South begun by J. L. M. Curry and the elect band of men who had met three years before at Capon Springs to concert plans for bettering the common schools. Mr. Ogden was daring in conception, but he was no less great in his appropriating power. Like a master builder, he made a wise use of all materials at hand. He entered into the vision that had come to such men as George Foster Peabody, Edwin A. Alderman, Hollis B. Frissell, Wallace Buttrick, Philander P. Claxton, Walter H. Page, Charles W. Dabney, and F. T. Gates. Mr. Ogden's sympathies grasped the situation in the South, emerging slowly from the waste of war and sorrow of defeat. He discerned at a glance what an aroused public opinion could do for progress through the common schools. His strategy consisted, not in money, not in the creation of new agencies, not in the attempt to impose ideas and institutions upon a people, but in his belief in the ability of the people of the South to do for themselves the things necessary for their own well-being. He coveted the privilege of sympathizing with the South in accomplishing these great social ends and in sharing and strengthening the impulses of the men who were bent on their accomplishment.

He had no ambition to be the founder of an institution. His name is identified with a movement, and not with an institution. He preferred to vitalize the nascent

common school system. He integrated all his efforts with what the towns, counties, and states had already undertaken. The wisdom of this plan has been abundantly justified. He multiplied himself a million times by inciting the whole citizenship to get underneath the task and to energize the schools as a means of social progress. The principle upon which he thus acted is of wide and present application. Only the state, through the power of public taxation, is equal to the task of training all the children for the duties of citizenship in democracy. The main thing is to stimulate the people of a community to do well by their own schools. The principle of local taxation, the necessity of community control, and the power of public opinion were the three prime factors in his plan of educational campaign for the South. The fruitfulness of his labors sprang naturally out of the force inherent in these three principles. He built, therefore, not for a day, but for the ages. Instead of being able to point to a single school that bore his name, he could point to state systems of schools into which he had breathed the energy of his own great personality.

Once as I sat in his office in New York City talking with him about educational plans for the South, I started to go, feeling that I had detained him far too long from his business. I can never forget the tone of his voice as he said, in a firm and manly way, beckoning me to remain seated, "*This comes first.*" The impulse of civic duty then borne in upon me was worth more than all the formal lessons that any college can give. He put life above livelihood. He revealed in his own career a fresh discovery of the divine order. "Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven and all these things shall be added unto you." So unstintedly did he give himself in service

to humanity that it seems irrelevant to dwell upon the fact that he was generous in giving of his own substance to the various causes that found a home in his great heart. Money, even his own money, means so little in all this as compared with the consecration of his life and personality to the good of others. He was a wise worker, but all of his plans displayed the dynamic of love, the motive force of faith.

The progress of the South in education during the past decade is unprecedented. The figures are like a fairy tale. And yet the fine enthusiasm of the people surpasses by far the import of any numerical statement. Take, for instance, Georgia. In 1902 the State was spending upon its public schools \$1,125,000. Last year it spent about \$5,125,000. In 1902 the value of school property was \$4,000,000 and within the decade it climbed to more than \$11,000,000, an actual increase of about \$7,000,000. Within the same period the number of school days rose from 113 to 140. During the same decade the increase in enrollment was 115,000 children. The actual increase in the per capita expenditure according to enrollment was \$6.18. Illiteracy among the whites was reduced from 12 to 7 per cent and among the Negroes from 52 to 36. This bare recital of the advance of schools in the single state of Georgia is an index of the beneficent changes wrought throughout the entire South by the co-operation of all the agencies at work for social betterment. ABOUT \$20,000,000 WAS ADDED ANNUALLY TO THE REVENUES OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS WITHIN A PERIOD OF 10 YEARS. Since 1906 about 1000 high schools have been established and developed. The significance of these figures is beyond the power of words to express.

In 1779 Thomas Jefferson drew out a liberal scheme

for public education in the South, beginning with elementary schools for all the people and rising through the high school to the state university. In accordance with the social structure of the South at that day, the only part of his scheme which was carried out was the apex; namely, the University of Virginia. It fell to a later day to build beneath that apex the solid body of the pyramid, consisting of the common schools as the base and the high schools resting upon them, all capped by the state university. This solid structure of public education is now rising in every Southern state.

Aiming in the beginning at the betterment of the common schools through an awakened public sentiment, Mr. Ogden's purposes gradually widened until they embraced all the activities making for progress in the South. He became in turn connected with the country life movement, with vast plans in the interest of public health and endowment of colleges; with the effort to make the state university the moral fortress of a democratic commonwealth; with the causes of social unrest throughout the nation; with the housing problem and the diverse evils growing out of industrial conditions in this country. The sweep of his activity in all these fields of human needs is suggested by his membership in the General Education Board, the Russell Sage Foundation, the Southern Education Board, the Jeanes Board, and other agencies dedicated to the common good.

When George Adams Smith was asked how he accounted for the marvelous intellectual output of Scotland during recent decades, he said that he attributed it in no small degree to the fact that in the seventies Mr. Moody put every man and woman in Scotland to reading the Bible with fresh interest. The intellectual energies

thus aroused had taken, to be sure, a direction in literature, science, and religion undreamed of by Mr. Moody, who in this way imparted the initial impulse to the Scottish mind.

We have been witnessing in recent months a similar renaissance in the South's constructive energies in the realm of statesmanship that is intoning a new day in the national life—a passion for fair play in politics, a searchlight of publicity thrown upon all stages of legislation, a conviction that the whole is greater than the part, as shown by an embargo on all forms of class rule, the public conscience quickened to the point where it is sensitive to the appeals of right and responsive to the demands of progress, a desire to set our own house in order because of a clearer vision of the moral mission of America in bringing in an era of good will among mankind.

I am inclined to think that many of these fine results are due to the stirring of the mind of the South during the last decade to serious thought and high endeavor as regards the rights of childhood, racial adjustment, social service, and the spirit of nationality. The South during this time has passed through an educative process of rare power. It has taken stock of untoward factors in its life, such as ignorance, poverty, inefficiency, sanitation, public health, and the twin forces of sectionalism and sectarianism. It has reviewed the past in contemplative mood. It has revived the memories of the constructive part that Southern men took in the formative period of the republic as well as recounted the facts in the later period of slavery, war, and reconstruction. It has studied the State's duty to educate the children for citizenship, to insure social order and to safeguard public health. These vital matters have been discussed frankly, not only

in the great Conferences for Education in the South, but likewise in rural communities throughout the entire region. The discussion has divided families, furnished new views to editors, and has proved the pivot upon which many a political campaign has turned.

It was impossible for the minds of millions of people to be thus stirred to the depths by elemental forces without the generation of large civic impulses and new ideals. This educational movement modernized the Southern mind, related it anew to the larger facts in the world today, and gave the people of the South a new sense of their latent power and the possibilities of co-operation for nobler ends. The decade marked a return to fundamentals, such as the fertility of the soil, upon which the home, school, and church depend; such as the duty of the State to the child in a democracy like ours; such as the relation of health to social progress and intellectual power; such as the necessity of co-operation for the growth of community life; such as the benefits to be derived from international experience in working out local problems touching the farm, school, sanitation, and racial adjustment.

Mr. Ogden's career was as a golden clasp binding together the North and South in sympathy and co-operation for the integrity of national life. He enlisted throughout the North men and women of initiative as co-workers in the tasks of the South. With him this noble band of friends would make an annual pilgrimage to the Conference for Education, study the facts in the Southern situation for themselves, and strike friendships there of enduring and fruitful character. It is not too much to say that Mr. Ogden in this way changed radically the viewpoint of the North with reference to the

South, rendering editors, publicists, and educators in the North sympathetic with the struggle of the South and eager to aid on all occasions the forces there making for practical righteousness. These kindly interlacing influences of the North and South have perhaps done more toward reuniting the sections in a common purpose and like-mindedness than any other single agency in the history of our country since the Civil War.

Thus, in these two ways, Mr. Ogden's efforts in behalf of public education have a distinctly national bearing: First, by stirring to the very depths the mind of the South through the discussion of the vital facts involved in democratic education; and, secondly, by knitting the sympathies of the leaders in the North and in the South, revealing their oneness in the fellowship of social service and in a common purpose embracing the good of the whole country. Never more happily was illustrated the meaning of that Scripture: "A little child shall lead them," for it was the efforts to open for the child the door to a larger life that brought about these signal results in social progress and national unification.

Mr. Ogden gave a new interpretation to the meaning of American citizenship. He had a scent for human need. He socialized his life and energies. Friendship was the essence of his working program. His hospitality was kingly and the list of his friends would make up the honor roll of America. There can be no pessimism in the presence of such an example. All problems dissolve as retreating clouds before the outreach of such a personality. So long as exalted citizenship in the private walks of life reveal the sanity and sacrifice that characterized Robert C. Ogden, there can be no doubt as to America's fulfilling the moral expectancy of mankind. "The character of the citizen is the strength of the State."

ROBERT C. OGDEN, THE PHILANTHROPIST *

BY WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT, LL.D.

THOUGH the burden of many engagements would, under ordinary conditions, prevent my coming to Brooklyn this afternoon, I could not refuse the invitation to lay a tribute of respect on the bier of one whom I feel it an inspiration to have known, and an honor to be allowed to call a friend.

We live in an age in which there is real encouragement for hope of the world's and the country's spiritual and moral improvement in the awakened human sympathy that manifests itself, not only in a greater public interest in promoting the welfare of those who have fallen behind in the race of life and are not sharing, as they should, the benefit of the general comfort, but also in the increased sense of personal responsibility on the part of those who now have the means of helping others, leading them to exert every effort to make these means effective. It is not possible, of course, that such a movement could acquire as wide popular support as this, without prompting some to take advantage of the fraternal sentiment aroused and turn it to their own selfish ends. Then there are others, not influenced by motives of either gain or political ambition, who love to do the thing which is the vogue, and who are busybodies seeking the limelight, and gratifying their vanity by activities which are not prompted especially by the true spirit of the good Samaritan. They make broad their phylacteries and are more interested in the personal part they play in these altruistic efforts than

* Address at the Ogden Memorial Service in the First Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn, November 9, 1913

they are in the good they do for the proper and deserving beneficiaries of their activities.

Then there are those who are made hysterical by the view that the millennium is at hand, that sin ought to disappear, that there can be no suffering or poverty for which the world and society are not directly responsible, and cannot eliminate over night; who focus their eyes on some foul spot and measure the progress of society by a constant contemplation of that particular rottenness to which their attention has been directed. They thus lose all sense of proportion with reference to the world in general, and the average good intentions of the present average member of society. They are not content unless all legislation and all charitable effort shall be concentrated to remove the especial evil that they in their earnestness think they have discovered. By nothing I have said would I minimize the importance that I sincerely attach to this awakened sense of brotherhood, this wider and intenser philanthropy, the existence of which everyone must recognize. With the plans for satisfying its practical aspirations, everyone must deeply sympathize. But in our admiration for it and our wish to make it useful and permanent, we must use some discrimination in our approval of those plans that are sane and practical and those which are merely fantastic, the result of misdirected enthusiasm. These unwise proposals and propaganda are merely ephemeral, as I hope and believe, and should not be allowed to divert the strong, healthful current of brotherly love that has manifested itself so clearly in the present decade. If encouraged, they will tend to obstruct it and end its usefulness by ill-advised exhibitions of extreme emotionalism that must inspire ridicule and cynicism. Nothing will bring so quickly a benumbing reaction paralyzing in its

effect. It constitutes the greatest danger such a real movement for good has to meet.

We are living in an age of such hysterical outbursts. They are inevitable, I admit, but they must be shown to lack the sympathy of sensible workers in the field of philanthropy. Now one of the great conserving and conservative factors in making clear such mistakes of misdirected enthusiasm and absence of common sense, and mitigating their possible danger, is the influence and example of a man like Robert C. Ogden, whose life has been devoted to the cause of the purest philanthropy, who did everything he did to accomplish the high, ultimate purpose that he had in mind—to furnish opportunity for self-help to an unfortunate race and a retarded section of our country. He brought to the task a business genius, a calm and quiet persistence of purpose, a clear judgment, a Christian character of serene purity, and an utter lack of self-exploitation.

We are not able now fully and justly to estimate the value of his work for the education of the Negro and for education generally in the South, because he was taken from us in the doing. We do not know much of what he has done, but we do know its great value. His plans, however, like those of wise men generally, were so broad, his look into the future was so extended, his ideas were so sane and practical, that not for many years yet can we weigh all the good that he planned and did, in its ultimate effect upon a section of this country whose social history has been full of difficult problems, and for a race of which this people must be trustees and guardians for many decades to come.

It was my good fortune to be associated with Mr. Ogden in several of the many projects for the betterment

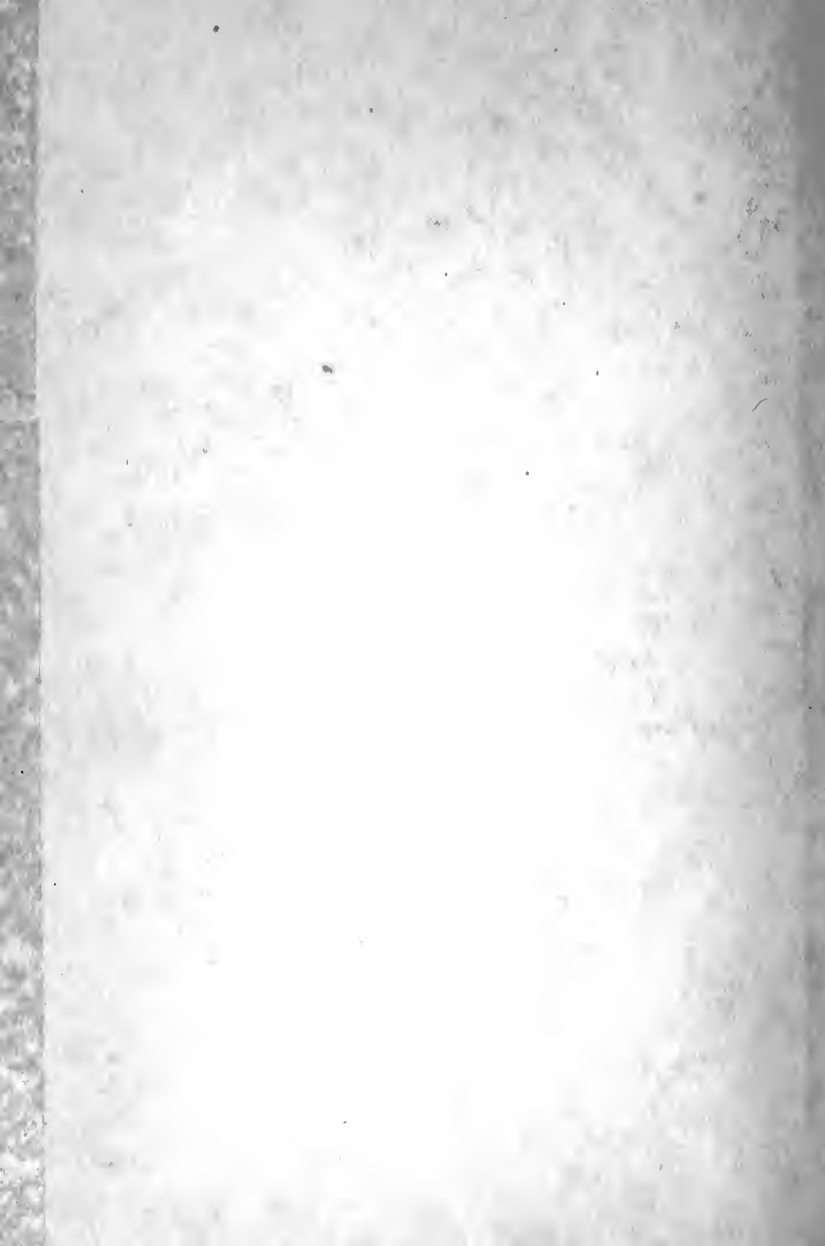
of the Negro and of education, which claimed and had his interest and his effective support. When I speak of the elevating effect that association with him had, I speak from personal knowledge. And the same thing is true when I speak of his clear-sightedness, his very great experience and knowledge, and his most valuable judgment on what was practical and what was not, in the objects to be pursued to bring about a betterment of educational and social conditions in the South.

One object of this meeting, I understand, is to commemorate Mr. Ogden's relation to Hampton Institute. Whether I am right in this or not, certainly no feature of Mr. Ogden's activities better deserves to be recalled and emphasized than what he did for Hampton. He did it because he knew that Hampton Institute was the mother of the movement toward the vocational betterment of society, white and black, throughout the country. There began the plan to prepare men and women in their youth to do well the work they are to do in life, to fit them to get as much for themselves and for society out of their labor as the intelligent training of hands and faculties by actual trial will secure. I regret to say that in all the enormous sums given for philanthropy, in which we greatly rejoice, there has been some lack of clear perception by the donors of the very great part that Hampton has played in the saving of an unfortunate race, and in furnishing opportunity for its self-elevation. Otherwise Dr. Frissell, the sane and saint-like successor of General Armstrong, would not still be obliged to spend most of his time and injure his valuable health in begging funds enough to meet Hampton's current expenses. Mr. Ogden knew this well, and greatly deplored the fact; and one of the greatest blows that

Hampton has suffered is the taking of Mr. Ogden from among us. When Dr. Frissell was himself recovering from a severe illness, which his untiring and exhausting activity in behalf of his institution had brought about, I know that he felt that the greatest affliction that could come to him and his cause was the loss of Mr. Ogden. In season and out of season, Mr. Ogden stood by him, stood by the work, aided him in securing the needed financial help, understood the burden he had to carry, and had that kind of deep but intelligent sympathy with the fight he was making that helps one in a great struggle.

I did not come here to make an address. I have had no time to prepare one in the multitude of duties that have forced themselves upon me in a new vocation, but I have felt that I must say this much merely as testimony of an eyewitness. I cannot close without an expression of the personal love that the beautiful character and charming personality of Mr. Ogden awakened in everyone who was privileged to come in contact with him. His sense of duty as a citizen was not in the slightest degree dimmed or made less strong because he had also a wider sympathy for mankind; but there was united in him with energy and a knowledge of how to do things, a sweet reasonableness, an elevated enthusiasm, and a sane courage and hope that one can never forget. He represented in the highest sense the real Christian gentleman, and it is no reflection on those whom he has left, to say that it will be many years before the world will look upon his like again.





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